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Viewing cable 06MEXICO6569, AMLO ASSUMES SHADOW PRESIDENCY

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Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
06MEXICO6569	2006-11-22 13:22	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Mexico

Appears in these articles:

<http://wikileaks.jornada.com.mx/notas/eu-siguió-con-lupa-la-movilización-poselectoral>

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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4331
INFO RUEHXC/ALL US CONSULATES IN MEXICO COLLECTIVE
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MEXICO 006569

SIPDIS

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/21/2016
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [MX](#)
SUBJECT: AMLO ASSUMES SHADOW PRESIDENCY
REF: A) MEXICO 6546 B) MEXICO 5318

Classified By: ACTING POLITICAL MINISTER-COUNSELOR ALAN D. MELTZER, REA
SONS: 1.4 (B/D)

Summary

1. (SBU) On November 20, defeated PRD presidential candidate Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador (AMLO) inaugurated himself "legitimate president" of Mexico before a crowd of thousands of supporters in the city's central square. Although large, the crowd was nevertheless noticeably smaller than those present at AMLO's major post-election protests. Perhaps more important than how many people attended the event, however, was who did not attend: all five PRD state governors were prominently absent, suggesting that AMLO may be losing support among some of the party's most powerful (and moderate) figures. With AMLO's "inauguration" behind us, all attention now turns to Calderon's official inauguration on December 1, which the PRD has threatened to block. Although the PRD will surely undertake some form of protest at the inauguration, AMLO's less than spectacular showing on November 20 could give the upper hand to those PRD legislators advocating for a more low-key, symbolic form of protest. End Summary.

Big turnout, yet less than previous rallies

2. (SBU) On November 20, throngs of AMLO supporters gathered in the city's central square or Zocalo to attend AMLO's self-styled inauguration. Crowd estimates -- which are notoriously unreliable and politicized in Mexico -- ranged from 100,000 to 1 million, although based on crowd estimates at prior events, we believe the crowd size was closer to the lower end of that range. While turnout filled the Zocalo, poloff observed that attendance fell far short of that at AMLO's other post-election rallies, notably the September 16 National Democratic Convention (NDC) (ref B), where the Zocalo was tightly packed and hangers-on overflowed into the surrounding streets.

3. (C) Poloff observed the event with PRD-affiliated city government (GDF) officials, Ulises Lara Lopez, Director General in the Secretary of Government, and his advisor Raul de la Paz. While Lara Lopez and de la Paz recognized that turnout was lower than at the PRD-sponsored NDC, they professed pleasant surprised with the attendance, explaining that far less effort was put into this event than the NDC. For example, they claimed that fewer resources were not used this time to transport people to the event and considerably less time and energy was put into advertisement/promotion.

The shadow cabinet

14. (SBU) At the ceremony, AMLO introduced the 12 members of his shadow cabinet who, according to the press, will be paid a monthly salary of 50,000 pesos (approximately USD \$4,700) for their shadow services. As with the turnout at his "inauguration," AMLO's "cabinet" is most notable for whom it excludes: while numerous AMLO loyalists and former members of his team when he was Mexico City mayor are included, there are few, if any, PRD heavyweights, suggesting that party members who are not beholden to AMLO are keeping a safe distance.

15. (U) After the presentation of the shadow cabinet, AMLO was presented with a "presidential sash" with his chosen seal, that of an open-winged eagle -- the same symbol used by revered 19th century president Benito Juarez. In his "inaugural address," AMLO articulated a program of 20 points for his shadow government which included proposals for a new constitution and institutional reforms.

Other PRD attendees

16. (U) Also sharing the stage with AMLO were current Mexico City Mayor Alejandro Encinas and Mayor-elect Marcelo Ebrard. Others PRD heavyweights present included PRD President Leonel Cota, PRD General Secretary Guadalupe Acosta, PRD co-founder

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Porfirio Munoz Ledo, former Senator Jesus Ortega, and PRD legislators such as Leonel Godoy and Raymundo Cardenas. Conspicuous by their absence, however, were PRD moral leader Cuauhtemoc Cardenas and all five PRD governors.

Next step: December 1

17. (C) With AMLO's "inauguration" behind us, all attention now turns to Calderon's official inauguration on December 1, which PRD legislators have threatened to protest and/or block. A speaker at the November 20 ceremony called for AMLO supporters to gather in the Zocalo early on December 1 to protest Calderon's inauguration. Juan Jose Garcia Ochoa, a former PRD federal deputy and a member of Ebrard's transition team, told poloff in a November 21 meeting that the PRD had decided to organize a protest in the Zocalo rather than outside the Chamber of Deputies -- the site of the official inauguration -- where there was greater potential for a clash with security forces. Garcia Ochoa said that the best resolution to the inaugural controversy would be for Calderon to choose an alternate site, which presumably would give the PRD a symbolic victory. In that case, he said PRD legislators would protest in a more mild form, such as by boycotting the event. If Calderon takes the oath in Congress -- as he continues to publicly insist -- Garcia Ochoa said the PRD legislators' protest would be ugly but non-aggressive. Garcia Ochoa claimed (perhaps disingenuously) that no matter where the ceremony is held, PRD legislators would not seek to prevent Calderon from taking the oath of office, because to do so would be illegal.

Comment

18. (C) The November 20 event was enough of a success to enable AMLO to save face, but it fell short of what was needed to give his movement a much-needed shot of momentum. The absence of all five PRD governors from the event was a particular blow, adding to the appearance that AMLO is losing support within the party hierarchy. President-elect Calderon's announcement of several key cabinet appointees early on November 21 also served to ensure that AMLO's day in the spotlight was brief. Nevertheless, AMLO remains a significant political force with considerable ability to draw the masses and it is far too soon to write him off. As he travels the country over the coming months, we will get a far

better idea of the strength of his support outside his Mexico City political base. Moreover, in the months ahead, AMLO will be closely monitoring the Calderon administration's performance and will be ready to exploit Calderon's inevitable missteps which, depending upon their severity, could give his movement a new lease on life at any time.

19. (C) As for Calderon's inauguration, the less than spectacular success of Monday's event may give PRD moderates the upper hand in party deliberations over whether to undertake a symbolic protest or to actually seek to prevent Calderon from taking the oath of office in the Congress. Also noteworthy is the decision to gather PRD supporters in the Zocalo, rather than outside of Congress, making a conscious effort to avoid conflict. While the PRD surely will seek to embarrass Calderon at his inauguration, the prospects for an aggressive confrontation are somewhat smaller now than they were last week.

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